

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 11, 1947

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ORCHARD-GRASS SEED CROP THIS YEAR INDICATED TO BE
ONE-FIFTH SMALLER THAN LAST YEAR'S RECORD CROP

Production of orchard-grass seed this year is estimated at 589,000 bushels of thresher-run seed, compared with the record of 740,000 bushels in 1946 and the 1941-45 average of 595,400 bushels, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported today. The decrease from last year is due entirely to the reduction in acreage, as average yield per acre is expected to be the same as last year. The crop in Virginia is indicated to be only half as large as last year, while production in Missouri is reported to be about one-sixth larger than in 1946 and the Kentucky crop may be only slightly smaller than last year.

An estimated 40,300 acres of orchard-grass seed were harvested in Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri. This is 21 percent less than the 50,700 acres harvested last year and 14 percent below the 5-year average of 46,720 acres. The sharp reduction in acreage in Virginia and the small decline in Kentucky are due chiefly to the relatively low prices received by growers for the 1946 crop. These prices were only half the average for the previous five years. Some loss in the seed acreage in Virginia resulted from a freeze about May 10.

Average yield per acre this year is estimated at 14.6 bushels of thresher-run seed. This is the same as in 1946 and 1.9 bushels more than the 5-year average of 12.7 bushels. The indicated, increased yields in Kentucky and Missouri offset entirely the smaller yield than last year in Virginia, where dry weather in May and early June and a late freeze shortened pastures, resulting in more and longer grazing of orchard-grass fields and thereby curtailing seed production.

The acreage of orchard grass estimated to have been harvested for seed, yield per acre expected, estimated production of thresher-run seed by States, and clean-seed production for the United States are given below.

| State | Acreage harvested | | | Yield per acre | | | Production thresher-run seed | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|------|-----------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| | Average: 1941-45 | 1946 | Indicated: 1947 | Average: 1941-45 | 1946 | Indicated: 1947 | Average: 1941-45 | 1946 | Indicated: 1947 |
| | Acres | | | Bushels | | | Bushels | | |
| Ky. | 22,600 | 25,000 | 23,000 | 13.2 | 14.5 | 15.5 | 298,600 | 362,000 | 356,000 |
| Mo. | 5,280 | 5,700 | 6,300 | 12.5 | 12.0 | 12.5 | 66,000 | 68,000 | 79,000 |
| Va. | 18,840 | 20,000 | 11,000 | 11.2 | 15.5 | 14.0 | 230,800 | 310,000 | 154,000 |
| U.S. | 46,720 | 50,700 | 40,300 | 12.7 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 595,400 | 740,000 | 589,000 |
| Thresher-run production (pounds)..... | | | | | | | 8,335,600 | 10,360,000 | 8,246,000 |
| Clean seed production (pounds)..... | | | | | | | 5,989,200 | 7,770,000 | 6,244,000 |

Like bluegrass pastures and meadows, orchard-grass fields were reported to be less weedy than usual and the seed appeared to be rather heavy. Thus, smaller loss is likely this year than last in cleaning the seed. Loss this year is estimated at 24.3 percent, compared with 25 percent last year and the average of 28.2 percent.

Harvesting of the orchard-grass seed crop averaged about 2 days later than last year, and 5 days later than usual. The growers reporting indicated that they started to harvest the crop this year about June 22 in Virginia, June 24 in Kentucky, and June 19 in Missouri. However, some seed in each of these States was harvested about a week earlier than the average of the dates reported.

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So far as known, prices to growers for orchard-grass seed were not established up to July 10. There is no support price for this seed this year. Prices received by growers for the 1946 crop averaged \$1.55 a bushel (\$11.07 per 100 pounds) for clean seed compared with the average of \$3.06 (\$21.86 per 100 pounds) for the previous five years.

Exports of orchard-grass seed for the 11 months ended May 1947 were 673,744 pounds compared with 1,944,710 pounds for the same period a year ago. These exports were very much smaller than those of the previous three years, when the Commodity Credit Corporation purchased for export an average of 4,644,333 pounds annually.

Imports of orchard-grass seed during the year ended June 1947 were 31,500 pounds compared with 206,900 pounds for the same period a year earlier and no imports from July 1940 to March 1946.

Carry-over of orchard-grass seed on farms in the United States is estimated at 15,000 bushels (210,000 pounds) compared with 3,200 bushels (44,800 pounds) last year and the 1942-45 average of 6,700 bushels (93,800 pounds). Quantities of this seed and other field seeds held by dealers on June 30, 1947 will be reported about August 8.

The 1947 acreage of orchard-grass seed in Denmark was indicated sometime ago by the Danish Government to be slightly larger than the 1946 acreage of approximately 18,450 compared with the 1941-45 average of 12,170 acres. The 1946 production in Denmark was about 6,634,000 pounds compared with the average of 5,250,000 pounds.

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